Workplace Skills and Career Development
Lesson Plan

Time Required: 4 hours

Purpose:

This workshop will serve as the agency's first communication about the importance of maintaining workplace and career development skills. For workplace skills, this workshop will allow the participants to begin thinking about what skills they may already bring to the workplace and what skills are needed for them to succeed. For career development, this workshop will review the steps of the career development process and the types of assessment tools available to assist the participant in this process. The workshop is a precursor to the "How to Construct an Individual Development Plan" workshop.

Workshop Objectives:

This workshop will prepare participants to:

1. Describe the career development process.
2. List resources available to assess values, interests, personality characteristics, and skills.
3. Identify skills needed in current job and in today's work world.
4. Use self-knowledge to determine the next step in skill assessment and development.

Resources Needed:

Materials:
Markers
Flip Charts

Handouts:
Five Step Career Planning Process
Assessment Tools
Self-Directed Search (Form R, 4th Edition, or Form E, 4th Edition)
Assessment Booklets
Occupations/Jobs Finders booklets

You And Your Career/Job booklets

Note: The Self-Directed Search must be purchased directly from the publisher:
Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. 1-800-331-TEST
> Work Values
> Work Activities
> Self-Management Skills
> Functional and Transferable Skills

Background on Skill Assessment:

Note to instructor/agency staff:
Assessment is an *ongoing* information collection process. Information is gathered using a *variety* of tools and strategies. The information needs to be *evaluated* and *used* to provide better service delivery. Consider these points as you plan your assessment strategy.

Assessment...
- *is an ongoing process.* An accurate assessment involves several events through time. Information gathered at one point in time and not in context with other information may not be very accurate.

- *uses a variety of tools and strategies.* Tools and strategies for assessment can include counseling sessions with a career counselor, discussions with supervisors, observation of behavior, review of work products, and use of other resources including adult education programs and formal assessment instruments. A "test" is only one type of assessment tool.

- *involves the evaluation of information.* The purpose of gathering assessment information must be job related. In addition, any formal assessment tools used must be valid and reliable. Finally, it is important to consider how the information gathered will be used.

- *must be used in connection with actual outcomes and/or services.* In the workplace, this information should be linked to job performance requirements. Think about how the assessment process will be linked to instruction, training or assistance to help the employee do his/her job better.

This workshop introduces the concepts of skills assessment to the participants. It is the beginning of a comprehensive program that includes an ongoing assessment of each participant's work and skill level. We recommend you work on putting together a comprehensive assessment package for your agency. If you choose to administer formal assessment instruments, do so after careful consideration and consultation with appropriate professionals.

This workshop is the beginning of the process. It is based on self-report. It is the first step in getting participants to recognize the importance of assessing and improving their skill level.

I.   Welcome and Introductions

Will be going over material in three parts today:
        1) career development introduction and assessment;
        2) introduction to workplace skills;
        3) introduction to workplace skills assessment.
You'll have opportunity for individual follow-up and customized assessment.

II.   Workshop Objectives

Display objectives on flip chart or overhead and review.

III.   Introduction to Career Development

Ask participants, "What do you think of when you hear the term 'career'?" Define career and differentiate it from a job.

A.   *Give reasons for need to focus on career development from the* **start**. *Highlight these points*:

        1.   Organizations cannot promise job security anymore. You create your own job security by:
                •   doing something you like and that satisfies you (you will be better at it if you really like it);
                •   staying in touch with knowledge, skills, and abilities in demand in the work world;
                •   finding a good match between you and the workforce needs;
                •   keeping your skills up to date and constantly improving them.
        2.   We are reviewing this process because this is probably not the only job you will have. You will continue to grow in your career, probably with different jobs, maybe with different organizations, so it is important you know the process of career development.

B.   Five Step Career Planning Process

        Review handout, emphasizing the importance of personal assessment as the initial step in the process.

C. Focus today is on first step of the process -- career assessment

Past experience with assessment instruments
Ask participants:

• *Have you or someone you know ever used assessment instruments?*
• *In what way did you, or they, find the results/feedback helpful?*

D. Overview of Assessment Tools and what they cover

1. *Review "Assessment Tools" handout, highlighting the different types of assessment tools available.*

2. *Explain the availability of the assessments and emphasize the importance of meeting with a counselor/qualified individual for interpretation of the results and helping participant integrate results into career planning and decision-making.*

3. *Discuss increased availability of assessments on-line and give Internet web-sites as appropriate.*

IV. **Administration of Holland's Self-Directed Search (SDS)**
One formal assessment of your interests is the Self-Directed Search. There are no right or wrong answers. Just preferences.

A. Presenter introduces and administers *the Self-directed Search*:

1. *Review theory behind and general organization of The Self-Directed Search.*

2. *Distribute SDS "Assessment Booklet" to each participant.*

Review procedures for completing the SDS.

Ask participants to follow step 1 on page 3. Let participants know you will be using the "Occupation Finder" to complete step 2 later.

3. *Give participants 15 - 20 minutes to complete pages 4 through 10 of the assessment booklet.*

4. *Walk around to assist participants and to hand out the "Occupation Finder" as they finish the assessment exercise. Participants can take a break as they finish.*

BREAK

B. Discussion of the SDS results

1. *Use "You and Your Career" Booklet to describe the six personality types. Instructor may also write the following on flip chart*:

Realistic	**I**nvestigative	**A**rtistic	**S**ocial	**E**nterprising	**C**onventional
Practical Technical Dogmatic Mechanical Ability	Analytical Scientific Open-minded Mathematical Ability	Creative Imaginative Curious Ability in Music, Art, Literature	Helpful Instructive Understanding Human Relations	Ambitious Supervisory Leading Finance and Commerce	Methodical Businesslike Productive Business and Clerical

Explain SDS results in general terms. Below is a suggested "script."

The six categories of the SDS represent personality types in a wide variety of jobs and occupations. Your top three categories can be compared to people with similar types to help you see what jobs best would be the best fit for you. You can also look at the jobs you are considering to see how they fit the results of your Self-Directed Search. Look also at the jobs you listed on page 3 under *"Occupational Daydreams."* How do they fit with your other descriptions?

Describe the relevance of scores and order of scores.

Remind participants that every occupation includes a range of personalities, and sometimes a person can be very happy in an occupation without having the matching personality.

Also, this survey is based on how you feel and what you know about jobs right now. As you learn more about work and about yourself, your answers might change.

DRAW THE HEXAGON ON FLIP CHART

Explain the relevance of code placement on the hexagon. For example, "All of the characteristics of the three touching categories and the related occupations are possibilities for you to explore. If your code includes categories that are not touching, that means you have many interests and need not be bound by the limits of your first letter. On the other hand, it may cause confusion because it is not clear where your highest interests lie."

2. *Use the "Assessment Booklet" and refer to the "Occupations Finder" to identify occupations with codes that are identical to their own SDS code and write them down. Distribute "You and Your Career" to give participants additional information.*

3. *Next, ask participants to make a list of occupations whose summary code resembles their code.*

4. *Discuss "next steps" that participants can take now that they have identified specific occupations. Emphasis will be given to comparing their summary code with the codes they will now identify for their Occupational Daydreams.*

    The first step in your career success is to do well in your current job. But the SDS gives you a start to planning where you will go next. Also, you can start to ask for different assignments/training, depending on where your interests lie.

5. *Exercise: In dyads or triads, depending on the size of the group, ask participants to discuss insights/reactions to their SDS results.*

V. Values exercise

Another area we want to look at is values. Values are, simply, whatever is important to us. There are values that almost everyone holds, such as life, health, our families, our children.

We do not often think about these values until and unless they are threatened in some way, and we do not think about our personal values, either, until we have to make choices regarding them.

A. **Exercise: Work Values**
    Distribute "work values." Read instructions and allow 5 minutes for group to complete.

B. Generate group discussion
    Ask for feedback on what some of the participants' values were.

*Discuss why values are **so** important to job satisfaction.*

A conflict sometimes occurs when you have two values that contradict each other and you have to make a choice between them. For example, you want to work close to your home and work around a lot of people. You may get a job offer that is close to home, but you would be in an office with only one other person who would be on the road a lot. You have a conflict of values, and you have to make a decision in favor of one or the other. Did anyone discover any conflicts of values?

Did anyone have trouble ranking their values?

Think about these values lists, and keep in mind that your answers may change over time and according to situations, and that value conflicts cause us the most difficulty when we are making decisions.

C.   Interests and values are two topics that help us think of who we are. But, we also have to think about skills. Come to see a counselor for more individualized help on the tools we have completed or on using other assessment tools regarding interests, values or personality characteristics.

VI.   Introduction to Workplace Skills

All of you are here today with different life and work experiences. You have developed different skills and different levels of skills. We want to give you an overview of what skills will be in demand in your current position and how you can develop those skills if you do not already have them.

Also, we all need to be thinking about our skills from a broader perspective. Not only do we need to have skills for our current job, we also need to be constantly aware of our skills in terms of preparing for future jobs.

A.   Skills are the most basic unit of your career. Discuss the relationship between career, field, job, activity/task/role, and skill.

> *Example:*
> **Career** - manager
> **Field** - computers
> **Job** - "Director of Information Systems"
> **Activity/task/role** - must assign work to team members
> **Skills** - communication, leadership, coaching, delegation

Generate discussion. What skills do people talk about you needing?

B.	Here are skills that are most commonly in demand at work today. Highlight and give practical examples.

1.	Basic Skills

Discuss the importance of basic skills and how they relate to performing any job well. Emphasize each skill individually.

a.	Reading
Most organizations expect employees to read and understand policy manuals, organizational guidelines, instructional materials and other written information.

b.	Writing
For example, you may need to write memos, letters, reports or proposals. Clearly written material helps: inform and persuade others; avoid confusion and mistakes.

c.	Arithmetic
Math is used in almost every job. For example, some jobs require math skills to: count change for customers, plan budgets, add time sheets, check accuracy of math in reports, etc.

d.	Information Gathering
You will need to use resources like dictionaries, maps, directories, phone books in your work.

e.	**Exercise: Work Activities Checklist**

Complete the checklist to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. This is for your review only, no one else will see it. Its purpose is to get you started thinking about basic skills you may need.

f.	Address participants' possible need for additional basic skills assessment and training.

If you want to discuss the need for any basic skills, you can see a counselor individually for a referral to basic skills assessment and training.

Note to non-DOL instructor: *be sure to identify what resources your agency has in terms of basic skills assessment and instruction. Some agencies have basic skills*

assessment and/or instruction programs like "SkillsBank" or "TABE" which can be very useful. You may want or need to take advantage of a variety of community resources which provide basic skills training.

2.   Computer Skills

        Today most organizations rely on computers. Knowing basic computer operations helps open doors to many career choices.

3.   Thinking Skills

        Begin a discussion on why thinking skills are important on the job. Point out the following areas:

        a.   Solve Problems:
                Supervisors often rely on individual employees and teams to help solve problems. This process involves:

                1)   identifying a problem
                2)   gathering information
                3)   developing possible solutions
                4)   choosing and carrying out the best solution
                5)   evaluating the results

        b.   Be Creative
                Many organizations seek original thinkers who can present new ideas and unique solutions.

        c.   Use Good Judgment
                This involves evaluating facts and beliefs -- your own and your employer's -- to reach sound conclusions.

        d.   Persuade Others
                Using logic to convince others can help you reach your goals and move forward in the workplace.

4.   Self-Management Skills

        Begin a discussion on how self-management skills can lead to success and how personal management skills can help people achieve in any field. Point out that successful employees are usually:

a.   Self-confident
    1)   they believe in themselves and their ability to do a job well

b.   Self-motivated
    1)   enthusiastic
    2)   hard-working
    3)   cooperative

c.   Responsible
    1)   dependable -- on time and ready to work
    2)   honest -- admitting mistakes and learning from the experience
    3)   good "time managers" who are able to
        a)   organize their time in order to finish the most important tasks first
        b)   manage stress through relaxation and exercise
        c)   keep personal matters from interfering with work

d.   **Exercise: Self-Management Skills Checklist**

Check off the self-management skills you think you have. What do you think you need more of?

5.   Communication Skills

Begin discussion that these skills are the key to getting along with co-workers, supervisors and customers. Good communicators:

a.   Express themselves effectively -- they:
    1)   think carefully before speaking
    2)   speak clearly and confidently
    3)   present one idea at a time, and make sure they are understood.

b.   Use body language and nonverbal communication such as:
    1)   eye contact
    2)   facial expressions
    3)   tone of voice
    4)   our nonverbal cues speak louder than words.

   c. Listen actively to avoid misunderstanding, they:
      1) give their full attention
      2) do not rush or interrupt
      3) ask questions if they do not understand or need more information.

   d. Are friendly - they make an effort to be pleasant and get along with others.

  6. Team Player

   Point out to participants the importance of being a team player. Being on a team means working with others to reach a common goal. Teamwork involves:

   a. Understanding differences - team members realize that others bring different abilities, experiences and backgrounds to the team.

   b. Cooperating with others means helping out when needed. It does not mean giving orders or expecting others to do all the work.

   c. Handling conflict: team members will not always agree. But, effective teams can work together to solve conflicts.

  7. Leadership

   Leadership skills enable you to influence and inspire others.
   Leaders...

   • Set an example by being responsible and hardworking.
   • Have positive attitudes about their work
   • Instruct others in a patient and understanding way. Leaders can help others reach their full potential.
   • Make decisions that help their organization grow.

VII. Workplace Skills Assessment

  A. You all probably have already developed skills in previous jobs or in activities outside of work. BUT MOST PEOPLE SELL THEMSELVES SHORT ON THE SKILLS THEY HAVE. Have participants brainstorm skills they have developed outside of work (homemaker, volunteer, parent). (FLIP CHART)

B.   **Exercise: Functional and Transferable Skills Checklist**

This checklist helps employees identify self-reported functional and transferable skills and skill gaps in the following categories: manual/technical, analytical/problem-solving, innovative/original, social/interpersonal, detail/data, and managing/influencing.

1.   First, put a check under "have" for each of the skills you are good at.
2.   Then, go back over the list and put a check under "enjoy" for all those skills you enjoy.
3.   We will do the "need" a little later.

Did you check off more than you thought you would?

LUNCH

C.   Discuss how you can identify your skills by looking at accomplishments. Use flip chart to get people to share accomplishments and then group identifies what skills they have shown while completing that accomplishment.

VIII.   Skills for your present job

Note to non-DOL instructor: for best results, your agency should conduct a "job analysis" to determine the skills an employee will need to perform the job. Only then will you know what skills are required so you can adequately "assess" whether or not the employee has them.

Once you know what skills you want to measure, you can choose from a variety of commercially available assessment tools tailored to specific skill sets (for example, office skills, mechanical ability, typing skills).

Remember, you must then be able to link the assessment with action. Will the employee then take training? An excellent mechanism for assuring employees follow-up with training is to provide each employee with the opportunity to complete an Individual Development Plan.

A.   Review position descriptions as a class

1.   *Distribute position descriptions and allow participants to read. Brainstorm the skills that they will need to perform the job (record on flip chart). If necessary, refer participants to previous skills checklists.*

These skills may need to be addressed in your IDP (rest of the afternoon)

2. You will complete an IDP to help you obtain the skills you need to perform your job. Supervisors can give you support, but *you* are responsible for improving your skills.

VI.   Summary and Evaluations

Five Step Career Planning Process

1. **ASSESSMENT**

   - interests
   - skills
   - values
   - personality characteristics

2. **EXPLORATION OF CAREERS**

   - general information to broaden and clarify options
   - specific information about potential occupations and employers
   - geographical areas
   - companies
   - individual contacts

3. **DECISION MAKING**

   - looking at results of self-assessments and information about the world of work to create a concept of the ideal career or job

4. **IMPLEMENTATION**

   - setting goals and developing an action plan
   - the job search
   - written materials
   - networking
   - interviewing

5. **CAREER ADJUSTMENT AND GROWTH**

   - training and developmental activities
   - long-range career/life planning and reassessment

Assessment Tools

Assessment tools provide you with information about your special qualities, interests, skills, beliefs, personality characteristics, and career concerns. The results from assessments will help you prepare realistic career objectives and goals. A counselor can interpret the results with you individually, or you may prefer comparing your results with others in a group training workshop. The following are commonly used assessment tools.

1) **Self-Directed Search (SDS)**
   This instrument provides a simple way of organizing information about people and jobs. It can be used to discover how your special pattern of interests, self-estimates, and competencies resembles the patterns of interests and competencies that many occupations demand. The results give you occupational titles to consider in your career choices.

2) **Adult Career Concerns Inventory**
   Employees who are rethinking their careers can benefit from using this instrument. The results show your pattern of career concerns in comparison to others. Specific stages of adult career development are identified which help you understand what is important to you at this point in your career.

3) **The Strong Interest Inventory**
   This inventory assesses your interests by comparing your responses with the interests of men and women in over 200 occupations who report that they are satisfied with their work. When considering an occupation, it is helpful to consider how that occupation is different from and similar to others. Six Occupational Themes allow you to examine broad areas of career interests.

4) **The FIRO-B (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation - Behavior)**
   The FIRO-B explains how personal needs affect various interpersonal relationships. This information can help you maximize the impact of your actions, recognize options for increasing job satisfaction and productivity, and explore alternate ways to achieve your goals.

5) **The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator**
   This personality instrument looks at preferences you have in certain behaviors, such as how you make decisions, how you process information, how you perceive the world, and where you get your energy. Understanding your preferences allows you to select career areas that are a better match to your natural preferences. The results can also provide you with valuable information regarding strengths and weaknesses in how you approach work tasks and how you relate to others.

6) **Career Beliefs Inventory**
   This inventory assesses beliefs related to your career goals. Understanding your beliefs may help you identify how these attitudes may inhibit or advance your actions towards particular career areas.

Work Values

Values are the guides by which you live your life. Work values are the motivations and rewards that energize you and contribute to the quality of your work life.   Please check the work values listed below which are most important to you.

__ Have financial return	__ Meet new people
__ Travel	__ Be challenged
__ Have Security	__ Work closely with others
__ Try new things	__ Be acknowledged for what I accomplish
__ Professional Advancement	__ Manage my own time
__ Creative Flexibility	__ Work in attractive surroundings
__ Work on a team	__ Be able to "leave the job behind when I go home"
__ Be part of a large organization	__ Work directly with clients and customers
__ Be part of a small organization	__ Learn/try new things
__ Work as a consultant	__ Use my intelligence
__ Have clearly defined duties	__ Make my own schedule
__ Be in charge	__ Relax and take things easy
__ Take on new projects which have not been done before	__ Get feedback
__ Manage my own projects	__ Use my imagination
__ Assume greater responsibility	__ Work in my community
__ Help others	__ Take risks

Of those checked, select the five most important to you.

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

Work Activities Checklist

Check below whether you feel "very comfortable," "comfortable," "uncomfortable," or "very uncomfortable" performing the following activities:

How comfortable are you...	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Uncomfortable	Very Uncomfortable
Reading a schedule				
Reading instructions				
Reading guidelines/memos				
Understanding oral instructions				
Alphabetizing				
Sorting into categories				
Comparing two lists				
Filling out forms				
Checking others' work for errors				
Checking others' spelling				
Checking others' writing/grammar				
Checking accuracy of math in reports				
Calculating hours worked				
Adding up weekly hours worked				
Rounding off numbers				
Calculating percentages				
Using a telephone book				
Using a map				
Operating a copy machine				
Operating a fax machine				
Operating a calculator				
Using a paper cutter				
Reading a metro/bus schedule				
Prioritizing work activities				
Seeking clarification of a task				

Self-Management Skills
(Personal Attributes)

Check both the skills you have and those that you feel you need for career advancement.

	I AM/ I HAVE..	I NEED TO BE/ HAVE MORE...		I AM/ I HAVE..	I NEED TO BE/ HAVE MORE...
Assertive			Loyal		
Authentic			Optimistic		
Cautious			Orderly		
Cheerful			Patient		
Conforming			Persistent		
Consideration			Poised		
Cooperative			Polite		
Determination/drive			Punctual		
Deliberate/careful			Reliable, dependable		
Dynamic (high energy level)			Self-controlled		
Diligent			Self-confident/self-assured		
Easygoing/calm			Sense of humor		
Enthusiastic			Sincerity		
Ethical			Strong-willed		
Fast and expedient			Spontaneous		
Flexible			Tactful		
Friendly			Thrifty		
Helpful			Tolerant		
Honest			Trustworthy		
Initiative			Resilient		
Integrity			Versatile		
Kind			Other:		

Workplace Skills and Career Development
Handout

Functional and Transferable Skills

Please check the skills you have, enjoy, and feel that you need for career advancement.

FUNCTIONAL AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS	SKILLS I...		
	HAVE	**ENJOY**	**NEED**
A. Manual/Technical Assembling/installing			
Constructing/building			
Fixing/repairing			
Doing detailed work with hands			
Thinking mechanically			
Working with animals			
Using hand tools			
Operating machinery or equipment			
Driving vehicles - cars, trucks, buses, tractors, etc.			
Moving materials by hand			
Typing			
Landscaping and grounds keeping			
Physical stamina			
Outdoor labor			
Other:			
B. Analytical/Problem Solving Diagnosing problems			
Investigating, seeking information			
Interpreting information			
Classifying/organizing			
Evaluating/assessing			
Prioritizing			
Logical decision making/thinking through a problem			
Researching a problem			
Solving math problems			
Using facts/evaluating			
Separating important from unimportant facts			

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FUNCTIONAL AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS	SKILLS I...		
	HAVE	ENJOY	NEED
Putting facts, figures, or information into logical order			
Scientific curiosity/thinking			
Thinking logically			
Other:			
C. Innovative/Original Using the imagination to create			
Creating flyers, logos			
Using intuition			
Coming up with ideas for programs/events/activities			
Creating stories, imaginative			
Creative showmanship/acting/performing			
Creative writing, self-expression			
Thinking of all the possibilities			
Artistic sense/aesthetics			
Drawing/artistic design			
Creative movement/dance/mime			
Synthesizing/putting facts and ideas together in new, creative ways			
Being innovative or inventing something new or different			
Composing music, songs, lyrics			
Other:			
D. Social/Interpersonal Listening skillfully/hearing			
Developing rapport/understanding			
Counseling/helping/guiding/mentoring			
Drawing people out/interviewing			
Instructing/training/educating			
Social grace/putting others at ease			
Encourage group togetherness			

	SKILLS I...		
FUNCTIONAL AND TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS	**HAVE**	**ENJOY**	**NEED**
Communicating tactfully			
Being of service/responding			
Providing information/advising			
Cooperating with others			
Showing warmth and caring			
Being supportive or cooperative			
Healing/nursing/nurturing/curing			
Other:			
E. Detail/Data Working with budgets, balancing checkbooks			
Proofreading/editing			
Inspecting/examining			
Word processing/typing			
Following directions/procedures accurately			
Being exact and accurate/careful			
Doing math quickly and accurately			
Scheduling/organizing events or activities			
Completing details on schedule			
Tracking items used and needed			
Categorizing/sorting/placing items in the right places			
Remembering specific facts or numbers			
Attending to details			
Filing, classifying, recording, retrieving			
Other:			
F. Managing/Influencing Coordinating a program			
Directing/supervising others			
Making business-related decisions			

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FUNCTIONAL AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS	SKILLS I...		
	HAVE	ENJOY	NEED
Negotiating with others			
Persuading/influencing others			
Chairing committees			
Overseeing projects/activities			
Planning meetings and setting goals			
Undertaking fund raising activities			
Organizing and managing an activity, task, or project			
Exercising leadership in a group			
Taking risks			
Speaking at group meetings			
Coordinating people and activities to work together			
Other:			

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